DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 060 735 FL 003 008

AUTHOR Abbey, Karin L.
TITLE Social Studies as Social Anthropology: A Model for ESL Curricula.
PUB DATE 28 Feb 72
NOTE 15p.;Paper presented at the Sixth Annual TESOL Convention, Washington, D. C., February 28, 1972

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Anthropology; Behavior Patterns; Biculturalism; Bilingual Education; *Bilingualism; Children; Cultural Background; Cultural Differences; *Cultural Education; *Curriculum Design; *Elementary Grades; English (Second Language); Mexican Americans; Non English Speaking; *Social Studies

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a program of cultural education designed for elementary school children in a bilingual setting. The author argues that only through the study of other cultures can the child who enters the Anglo-American school system from a non-Anglo background appreciate fully the relationship between his culture and the dominant culture, and understand his place within the two cultures. The program suggested presents nine units, each one on the study of a particular culture. The cultures to be studied represent a wide variety of types selected for diversity in population size, language, subsistence, race, climate, and geography. The life of the child is considered in each culture. Each culture is studied objectively as an entity, without reference to or measurement against a master culture. Unit 10 provides a chance for the child to see differences and similarities among the cultures by classifying the children from the nine cultures in terms of the way they live. Different classification criteria produce various groupings, underlining a variety of differences and similarities. (VM)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED 060735

SOCIAL STUDIES AS SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY: A Model for ESL Curricula

The term 'social studies', as it is used in elementary school curricula, covers a wide range of content and theoretical orientation. It contains the beginnings of what will become, in the higher levels of education, political science, history, geography, psychology, sociology, economics, some portion of philosophy, and anthropology. I have mentioned anthropology last because, like 'social studies', anthropology has served as a catch-all category for the information and theory other disciplines had not laid claim to. As social studies is defined as the study of man's societies, so anthropology is defined as the study of man. It may seem redundant then, to define social studies as social anthropology, and this would be the case, had social studies been generally taught as the study of man's societies.

However, educators in the past have concentrated on only a few subjects within the social studies, to the neglect of the other subjects, and to the detriment of the discipline as a whole. One of the areas of concentration has been history. History is a legitimate component of the social studies, but it is far from the only one, especially when it is limited, as it usually is in this country, to the recorded political history of the Western World.

Another area of social studies which has been emphasized is civics. It has been argued that this emphasis is necessary, since the goal of the social studies is understood to be the education of children as good, useful citizens. In this regard, I agree with those who point out that the production of good citizens is the goal of education in general, and while the social studies must contribute to achieving that goal, they cannot and should not be the sole contributor . (Sowards, 1963, introduction)

Moreover, I do not believe that the best way to make a child a potential

FL 003 008

good citizen of the world is to give him a simplified picture of the way his own government works at various levels, and to take him on tours of civic buildings. These things are somewhat interesting, and to varying degrees useful, but they fall far short of preparing the child to live in today's world. On our shrinking globe, the child best prepared to face life is the child who will not be suddenly shocked to find out that while he is sitting in his comfortable classroom, thinking about lunch at McDonald's, there are small bands of people scratching their living from harsh deserts, viewing life in a way he has never imagined; the child who will not be surprised to hear that below the Rio Grande there is a continent and a half which contains a wide variety of peoples and a rich and varied history; the ghetto child who will not be stunned to hear that his is not the only ghetto in the world, and that not all ghettos are reserved for people of his racial or ethnic background. In short, the child best prepared for the world of the future, is the child who has some perspective on the nearly infinite variation in the world of today.

This, then, is part of what I mean by 'social studies as social anthropology' -- the study of the variety of peoples and life styles in the world. I use the term 'social anthropology' rather than 'cultural anthropology', because the latter has been traditionally linked with the study of primitive and/or exotic cultures, and the introductory social studies curriculum I will describe includes the study of familiar and/or urban cultures as well.

There have been several recent efforts to broaden the scope of the social studies and to include disciplines other than history and civics. These efforts seem to fall into two groups: those that focus on a single feature of life and view it cross culturally -- 'chairs around the world',

for example, and those that focus on the child and his own environment before going on to the study of other peoples, the 'you and your community' approach.

The 'chairs around the world' approach is useful in that it shows the learner something of the variety in the world. However, by concentrating on specific objects or patterns of behavior, it rips these patterns or objects out of the context within which they make sense and presents them to the learner as things in themselves. The learner is encouraged by this to compare the abstract efficiency or esthetic value of the things, and the only basis for comparison he has is his own culture. For example, given a focus on transportation around the world, the teacher might mention that the Kalahari bushmen walk wherever they go, that the desert Arab rides a camel, and that Western man has planes, trains, buses and cars to carry him. Given this array, there are few learners who would not assume that the culture with planes, trains, buses, and cars was better than the others, although some might find romantic appeal in the camels. The learner will not see that within the context of the bushman environment walking is a reasonable mode of transportation, and equally as useful as camel-riding to Arabs, or jet-setting to Americans.

In addition, this approach places equal emphasis on concepts which are not of equal importance. To study chairs cross culturally suggests that chairs are of equal importance in all the cultures to be studied, which is not likely to be the case. Another false parallel occurs in the selection of topics to be studied. One social studies program of this sort suggested for the introductory lessons, "Understanding the Past through the Study of: chairs, children, the American flag..." (Martin, 1963). Chairs and children, presumably, have a very different

significance in any culture, and the study of the American flag is limited to one culture alone. The danger of placing in parallel position, items which are not in fact parallel in nature or significance must be emphasised. In grade school I participated in a course of study which focused on each continent in turn. Having gone from studying Antarctica and its inhabitants to studying Asia and its inhabitants, I came to think of the Chinese as somehow similar to penguins. This is a ludicrous example, and I was quickly disabused of my misconception. More subtle mistakes are harder to erase.

Only through the holistic approach of anthropology can such pitfalls be avoided. By studying individual cultures as discrete entities, the learner can see the relationship between the various patterns of behavior within each culture, and he is not pointed toward judging any particular item in terms of a supposedly parallel item in another culture. This is another part of what I mean by social studies as social anthropology.

The second major approach to innovative social studies curricula follows the pattern shown in Figure 1. First, study is centered on the child himself, then the scope is expanded to include the family, then the school, and finally the local community. At this point, the course of study usually takes one of two directions -- it may continue in expanding concentric circles to include the state, the region, the nation, and the world community; or it may jump from the learners' local community to a foreign community -- a town in Japan, perhaps, that parallels the learners' community in size or some other dimension.

The merit of this approach is that it recapitulates the growth of awareness in the child -- expanding from knowledge of himself to knowledge of increasingly larger communities of people. Unfortunately, the informational content of this sort of approach often closely resembles the

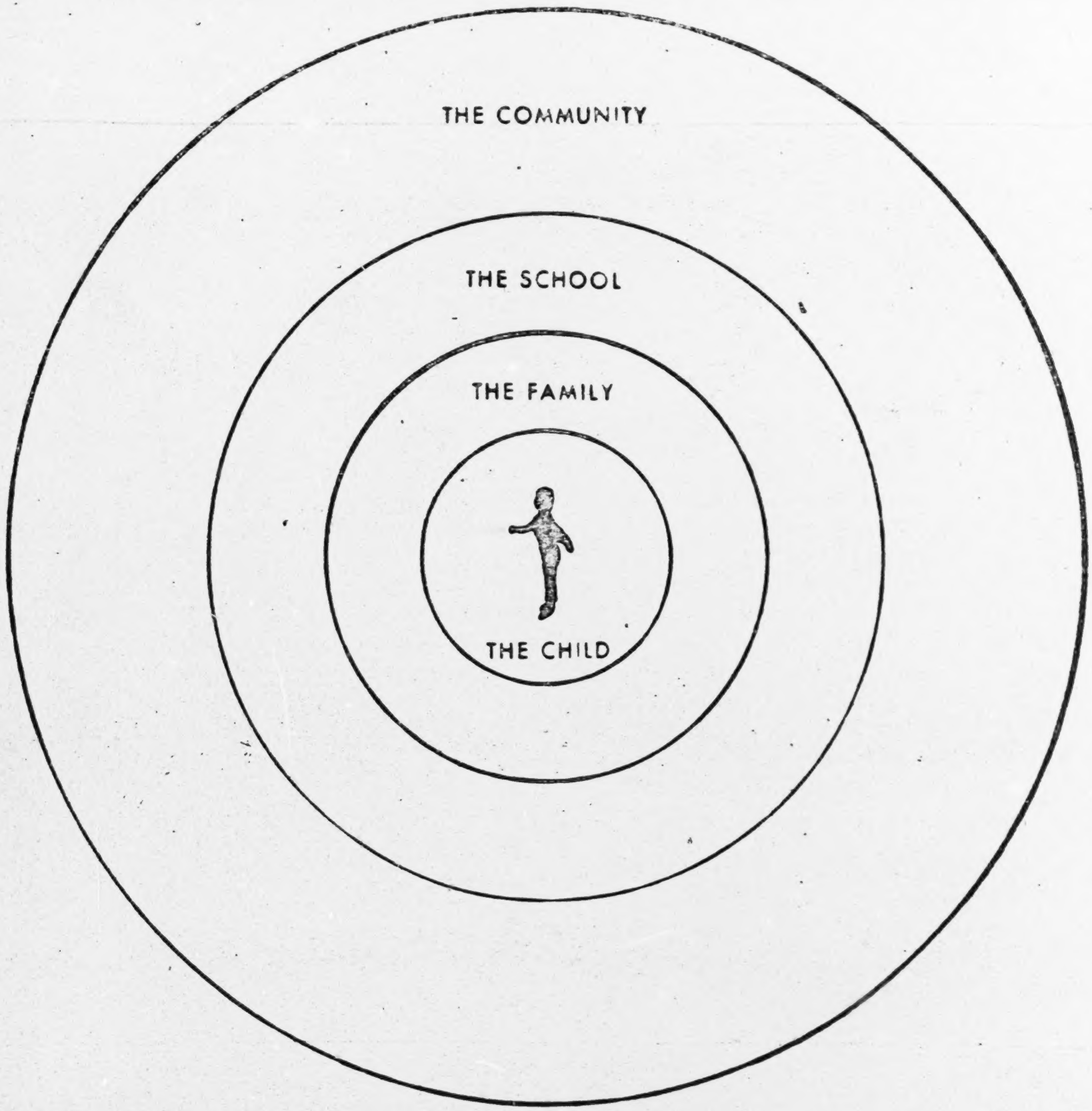


FIGURE 1

civics orientation already discussed.

But the major drawback of this approach is that, having introduced social studies by focusing on the learner and his own cultural environment, the curriculum must present all other cultures in comparison and contrast to the learners'. Whether or not this comparison is explicit, the learner cannot fail to see the nature of the relationship -- it's us and them. This ethnocentric focus leads far too easily into regarding things which differ from the things of the learners' culture as being not only strange but inferior.

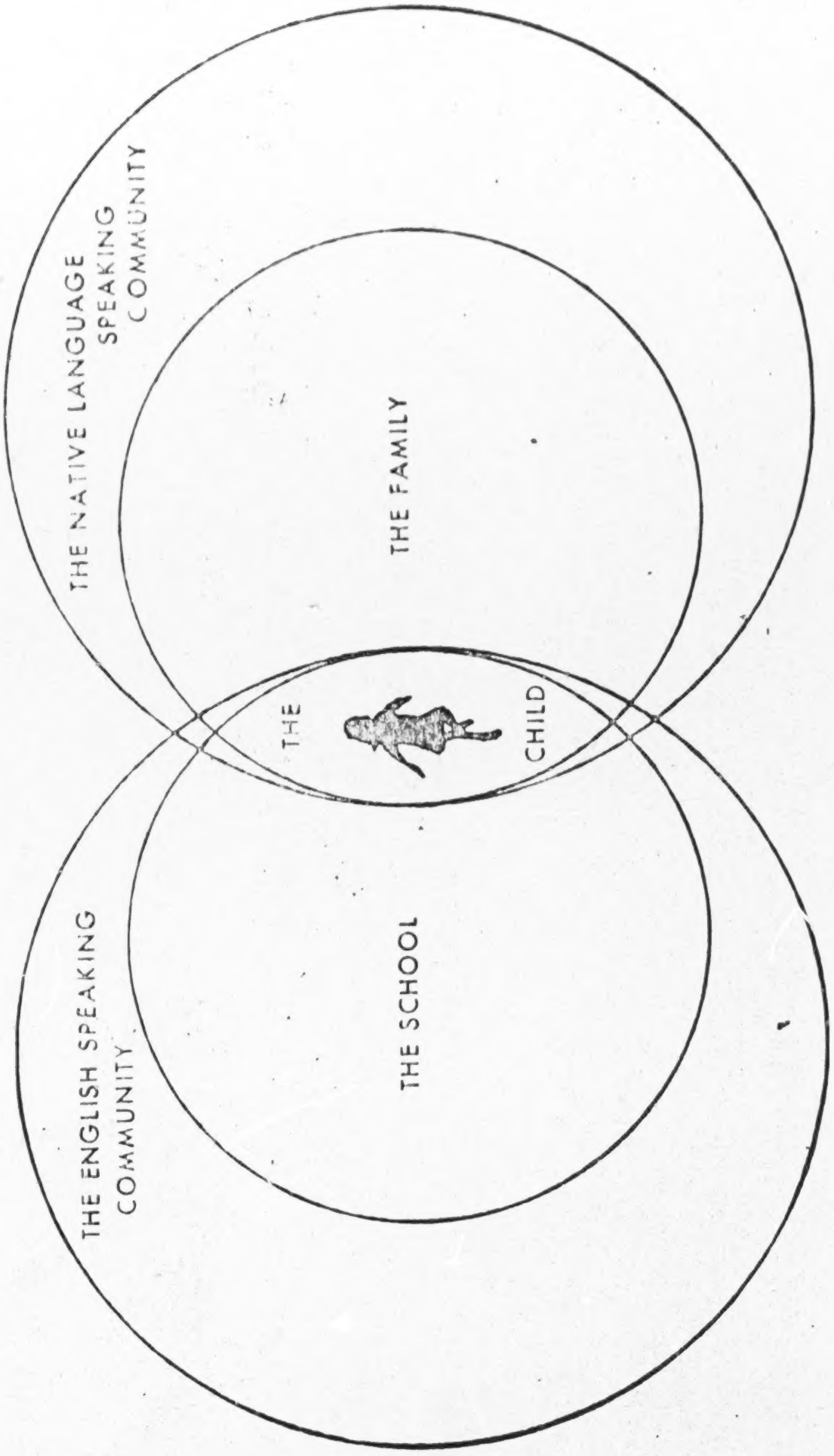
It is much easier for the learner to view other cultures in something like an objective manner, if, in the beginning, he is presented with a wide range of cultures, each of which is presented as a unit, with its own needs and values. This is important for any child, but it is essential for the bilingual/bicultural child, because such a child finds himself in a position not like the one illustrated in Figure 1, but in the position illustrated in Figure 2. The child belongs to two communities, which, while they intermesh, are far from concentric. To attempt to follow with this child the program illustrated in the first diagram would be to deny the validity of half of his heritage.

A course of study which presents several cultures, each viewed with as much objectivity as possible, provides the learner with the knowledge that there is more than one way to do things, and that of the many ways, no one is the only right way. This is the third part of what I mean by Social Studies as social anthropology, and it is the part most important for the bilingual/bicultural child.

The CITE introductory course of study in Social Anthropology presents a variety of cultures, each as an integral whole, and without reference

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

FIGURE 2



to some 'master' culture against which the others are measured. Before explaining the manner in which this is done, I should mention that the course of study to be outlined is a series of ten lessons which serve as the learners' initial experience in the social studies, and that these ten lessons form a strand within a total curriculum produced by CITE -- Consultants in Total Education, Inc., for the second grade in a Mexican-American bilingual/bicultural project.

The first nine of these ten lessons present nine cultures to the learners. Selecting the cultures to be presented is an important part of developing the curriculum. They must represent a wide range of variation. Figure 3 shows some dimensions of the cultures used in the CITE social studies strand. Down the far left column are the nine cultures. Reading down each of the remaining columns, one can see considerable variation within each area of focus. Several climates are involved, as well as several types of geographic environment. The range of settlement pattern, or population size, is wide; several racial groups are involved, as are eight languages; and various levels of subsistence are discussed. An effort has been made not to link any race or language with a particular stage of technological development. An aspect of particular interest in a bilingual program is the column on the right. Five groups are monolingual and four bilingual. Two of the monolingual groups learn English as a foreign language. Among the bilingual groups, two have English as their second language, one has French and another has Spanish. This points out to the learners that English is not some sort of master language, but that people also learn other languages as a means of broader communication.

There are gaps in the range illustrated in this chart, but such gaps are unavoidable in a presentation limited by time, and I believe the range

	Climate & Geography	Population Size	'Race'	Language (Native)	Subsistence	Monolingual or Bilingual
TAHITIAN	Tropical Pacific Island	Nuclear Family	Polynesian	Tahitian	Agriculture, Fishing, & Gathering	B < Tahitian / French
FRENCH	Temperate Alluvial Plain	Small Village	Caucasian	French	Urban Economy	M (English)
WISCONSONIAN	Temperate Glacial Plain	Nuclear Family	Caucasian	English	Agricultur & Urban Economy	M
NAVAJO	Arid Harsh Desert	Extended Family	Amer-Indian	Navajo	Agriculture & Sheepherding	B < Navajo / English
MEXICAN	Temperate Highland Valley	Small Village	Mestizo	Nahua	Agriculture & Market Economy	B < Nahua / Spanish
KALAHARI BUSHMAN	Arid Hot Desert	Kinship Band	Bushman	Bushman (Kung)	Hunting & Gathering	M
LOS ANGELENO	Mediterranean Coastal Valley	Large City	Mestizo	Spanish	Urban Economy	B < Spanish / English
BOSTONIAN	Temperate Coastal Hills	Large City	American Negro	English	Urban Economy	M
JAPANESE	Temperate Inland Valley	Large City	Mongoloid	Japanese	Urban Economy	M (English)

FIGURE 3

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

given here is sufficient to introduce the concept of the variety of human cultures.

In order to avoid presenting a monolithic picture of any of the cultures, and to give the learners some identification with them, each culture is represented by a child of the learners' own age. Four cultures are represented by boys and five by girls -- both because there are more women than men in the world, and because women are conspicuously absent from elementary school curricula. First the learners are introduced to the child by name and cultural or geographic identification, then they are told something of what the child's life is like. At no time is the learner encouraged to view the child as representative of his entire race or culture. Other characters are introduced to supply contrast and diversity within the group being discussed.

The first section of each lesson is a slide show. The teacher shows a set of slides and reads an accompanying monologue describing the culture. While presenting the slides, the teacher asks questions of the learners and encourages comments and questions from them. The learners are not required to memorize any of the information. They are only responsible for listening to the presentation, contributing when they desire to, and being able to answer seven key questions.

These questions are: What does A look like?
What does A wear?
What kind of house does A live in?
Where does A live?
Who does A live with?
What does A eat?
What do A's parents do?

They are centered on man's basic needs -- food, shelter, and companionship and support, and they are the core of the second section of each of the nine lessons. They provide a means of illustrating the basic similarities among men.

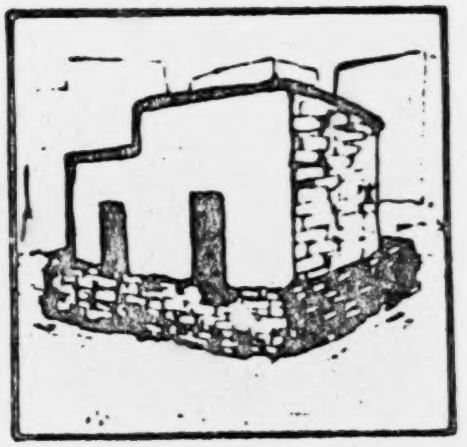
Each child is provided with a workbook, each page of which is titled with one or more of the basic questions in statement form. Thus the first page is entitled, "What People Look Like and What They Wear," and the second page is entitled, "Houses People Live In." Each of the pages has nine boxes, each box labelled with the name and identity of a child. For each lesson, the learners receive a worksheet like the one shown in Figure 4. The learners cut the pictures off thier worksheets and paste them in the labelled boxes on the appropriate pages of their workbooks. Having started with nine culture-specific worksheets, the learners will, at the end of the ninth lesson, have six pages, each of which shows one aspect of living across nine cultures.

That there are basic similarities shared by all cultures is implicit in the fact that all the cultures provide answers for the basic questions. But these similarities as well as other more specific similarities and differences become explicit only in the tenth and final lesson. In this summary lesson, the learners are asked to classify the children from the nine cultures in terms of the way they live. Classification is a technique that these learners have already mastered in other strands of the CITE curriculum. If necessary, the teacher suggests some classifications -- "People who live on islands," "People who grow or hunt their own food." The learners then classify the nine children according to these criteria, and suggest others of their own. Classifications which

8a

FIGURE 4

ROSITA SANCHEZ OF MEXICO



include all the children (People who eat), and those which include none of them (People who walk on water) are acceptable responses. As the learners develop and fill their classifications, they see that some cultures are grouped together in some classifications, and are separated in others.

The teacher then discusses the classifications with the learners, and asks which cultures seem most similar to culture A, which to culture B, and so on. By doing this, she is using each culture in turn as a basis for comparison, rather than taking one as the measure for all. The teacher then asks whether any two children studied are in all ways alike, whether any child is in all ways unique, and whether anyone in the class is completely unique or completely like someone else. To all these questions, the learners reply no. The teacher agrees -- people all over the world are like each other in some ways, and different from each other in some other ways. That's what social studies is all about.

Clyde Kluckhohn once said, "Every man is in some respects like every other man, like some other men, and like no other man." (Kluckhohn & Kelly 1949) This is a simple but essential truth that is often ignored by curricula which emphasize only one side of this equilateral triangle. They concentrate on the ways in which each human is like every other human -- making the brotherhood of man seem like identical twinship for the world, repressing the differences that make people interesting and that make for the real difficulties in communication. Or they stress the ways in which each human is like some other humans -- demonstrating first how much the learner has in common with the rest of his community, and then showing him other communities as monolithic structures which completely [illegible]sume the people within them.

But it is only through the realization that he is in some ways himself alone, in some ways a member of a group or groups, and in some ways a part of the family of humankind, -- only through valuing his differences from other people as well as his similarities to them, that the child of today can be fully prepared to face life in this world. The CITE introductory social studies curriculum is an attempt to bring that realization to the child.

Karin L. Abbey

Curriculum writer, Social Studies

CITE, Inc.
1081 Gayley Ave.
Los Angeles, Calif.
90024

SOURCES CONSULTED

Bruner, Jerome S.

1966 Toward a Theory of Instruction. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc.

Kluckhohn, Clyde & W. H. Kelly

1949 "The Concept of Culture." in The Science of Man in the World Crisis. Ralph Linton, ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

Martin, Clyde Inez

1963 An Elementary School Social Studies Program. Austin: University of Texas.

Michaelis, John U. & A. Montgomery Johnston, eds.

1965 The Social Sciences: Foundations of the Social Studies. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Sowards, G. Wesley, ed.

1963 The Social Studies: Curriculum Proposals for the Future. Palo Alto: Scott, Foresman, & Co.

Spindler, George D., ed.

1963 Education and Culture: Anthropological Approaches. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.